

State Wild Rivers Addition: Portion of Brunsweler River

Background: The legislature designates rivers to the state wild rivers system. The Department of Natural Resources administers the system to preserve, protect, and enhance a river's natural beauty and unique recreational value. The Brunsweler in Ashland County would join the three existing state wild rivers: the Pike in Marinette County, the Pine, and Popple in Forest and Florence Counties. The last time a river received this designation was in 1965.

Issue: The Brunsweler is a scenic small "headwaters" river in Ashland County in the Lake Superior drainage basin. Much of it is trout water. Approximately ten miles of the river would be designated as a state wild river by this legislation. This portion of the river is within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The designation honors the memory of Martin Hanson, prominent conservationist who championed the Brunsweler state wild river proposal until he passed away late in 2008.

Key Points:

- The intent of the state wild rivers program is to "preserve some rivers in a free flowing condition and to protect them from development."
- Because the proposed wild river segment of the Brunsweler River is within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and it touches very few private parcels, the designation is expected to have little impact on current management of the river and little impact on private landowners.
- The U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources will work together on wild river management issues for the Brunsweler.
- The Brunsweler River is in the Ashland County Town of Marengo, which supports the wild river designation.
- Key protections afforded by this wild river designation are
 - no human activities to change the river channel would be allowed
 - no new dams, piers, or bridges (with the exception of new public highway bridges, foot bridges, or bridge access to residential dwellings where no alternatives exist).
 - No grading on the river bank over 10,000 square feet.

None of these activities are anticipated for the proposed Brunsweler wild river segment.

- The proposed wild river segment flows through Mineral Lake, a natural lake, and Beaver Dam Lake, which is impounded by a dam built by the Hanson family in the 1930s. The U.S. Forest Service, the current owner, may maintain this dam. Much of the land around Beaver Dam Lake was owned by Martin Hanson, and because of his donations, most is now in public ownership.

Author: Nancy Larson, Lake Superior Basin Water Team Supervisor 715/395-6911

For more information and to view the Brunsweler River map, please visit our UW Extension partner's web site: <http://basineducation.uwex.edu/lakesuperior/>



February 11, 2009 Legislative Briefing



RIVER ALLIANCE of Wisconsin

Representative Spencer Black, Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
417 North
State Capitol

Dear Representative Black and Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee:

The River Alliance of Wisconsin is thrilled to voice our **support for AB 7**, the designation of the Brunsweller River as a Wisconsin Wild River, and to honor Martin Hanson with this special recognition of his long-time home river.

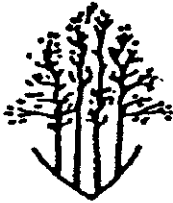
Over 40 years ago, a bill authored by Representative David Martin (Neenah, 1961-71) and co-sponsored by Robert Haase from Marinette and Paul Alfonsi from Minocqua proposed the creation of the Wisconsin Wild Rivers Program. Its intent was "In order to afford the people of this state an opportunity to enjoy natural streams, to attract out-of-state visitors and assure the well-being of our tourist industry, it is in the interest of this state to preserve some rivers in a free-flowing condition and to protect them from development;" ss 30.26(1). The bill won broad, bipartisan support, passed unanimously in both the Senate and the Assembly, and was signed into law by Governor Warren Knowles in November 1965, making it the first law of its kind in the United States. The Pine and Popple Rivers in Florence and Forest Counties, along with the Pike River in Marinette County were designated as Wisconsin's first three wild rivers concurrent with the creation of the program. Three years later, U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson took the idea national, leading the effort to create the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968.

As a result of their Wild River designations, the Pike, Popple and Pine Rivers have remained pristine, and the communities traversed by the rivers have benefitted greatly from the fishing and recreational opportunities they provide. Unfortunately, the Wild Rivers Program has not been put to use since those first designations in 1965. It is high time this underutilized program is resurrected, and designating the Brunsweller River as the first Wild River since 1965 is a fitting tribute to dedicated conservationist, Martin Hanson.

The River Alliance of Wisconsin urges your swift approval of AB 7, and looks forward to working with you toward Wild River designation of many other worthy rivers in coming years.

Sincerely,

Lori Grant
River Protection Program



Bayfield Regional Conservancy

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February 10, 2009

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Wisconsin State Legislature
Assembly Natural Resource Committee
Madison, WI

To the Members of the Assembly Natural Resource Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support Assembly Bill AB-7 designating the Brunseweiler River, located in Ashland County, as a Wild River. For much of its length the Brunseweiler is an outstanding resource water that flows through wetlands, lakes, forestland, and the Penokee Mountains before it joins the Marengo River on the Bad River Reservation. Many of our organization's members enjoy kayaking, hiking and bird watching along the rivers granite cliffs through hemlock, white pine and upland cedar forest. The forests of this area provide significant habitat for interior forest dwelling birds that, due to significant habitat loss throughout their range, are declining in numbers. These include species such as the black throated blue warbler, winter wren, pileated woodpecker, oven bird, and hermit thrush, among others.

Due to its conservation significance, the Bayfield Regional Conservancy is actively working to protect land along the Brunseweiler River and currently holds a conservation easement on 85 acres of property situated along its course. The easement prevents subdivision, development and clearing and ensures an intact shoreline along the river. The conservation easement was donated to the Conservancy in the Spring of 2008 by life-long conservationist Martin Hanson. Dubbed "Camelot North" by Martin's colleagues, the property was a northern retreat for Democratic policy makers for decades and many a seed of Wisconsin's significant conservation initiatives were germinated there with the help of Senator Gaylord Nelson, Rep. Dave Obey and others. A large stretch of the Brunseweiler River, including Beaverdam Lake, flows through the property and Martin managed the land to restore and provide habitat.

Passage of Assembly Bill AB-7 would not only duly recognize the Brunseweiler River for its outstanding conservation values but it would also honor the life and work of Martin Hanson. Thank you for considering this legislation.

Respectfully,

Ellen Kwiatkowski
Executive Director

*Protecting natural lands, waters, forests, farms and places of scenic,
spiritual and historic value in the Bayfield Region.*

MARTIN HANSON

P.O. Box 707

Mellen, Wisconsin 54546

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12/28/06

BOB JAUCH & GARY SHERMAN

RE: A STATE DECISION ABOUT A "BRUNSWEILER RIVER AND
SCENIC LAKES" PROPOSAL

THE MAP IS A SUGGESTION. THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT
HOW IT WOULD BE MANAGED. THIS IS A DECISION FOR
THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE D.N.R. AS IT IS
NAVIGABLE WATERS.

THE BEST THING IS IT WILL COST NO MONEY.

ANOTHER QUESTION IS BEAVER DAM LAKE HAS 2 DAMS,
A SPILLWAY AND A LOCK SECTION. THERE IS GRANITE
LEDGE BETWEEN THESE BETWEEN THESE, THAT COULD
THAT COULD BE BLASTED OUT FOR A WATERFALL - ONE
FOREST SERVICE ^{ENGINEER} ~~LIVER~~ THIS AS THERE WOULD BE NO
MAINTENANCE. THE 2 OLD DAMS COULD BE BURIED WITH DIRT.
MAT DAHLMAN WITH NATURE CONSERVANCY, PERSONALLY
LIKED THE IDEA. ENCLOSED IS AN ENDORSEMENT BY
THE TOWN OF MARENGO AND A LETTER ABOUT ENDORSEMENT
AND PERMANENT CONSERVATION EASEMENT TO PROTECT MY
THE LAND.

MAT DAHLMAN ALSO SAID ANN ARCHIE, SUPERVISOR OF THE
CHEQUAMEGON-NICOLET NATIONAL FORESTS WAS IS BEING
REPLACED BY JEANNE HILL OF THE SAME FOREST.
POSSIBLY IN THE FUTURE WE COULD GET TOGETHER.

Martin

Martin Hanson Adjournment Honor

1/5/09

Senator Jauch moves to adjourn the Senate in honor of Martin Hanson who died in November but will always be remembered as one of the most important and revered environmental leaders of the last century.

Martin Hanson loved the land and lived his life to preserve it. He was happiest when he was in his beautiful property in Mellen, Wisconsin surrounded by the wildlife he cared for and the natural resources that sustained his life and his passion for protecting it.

Martin will always be remembered and respected for his successful advocacy for major environmental policies that will protect our natural resources and enrich the quality of life for generations long into the future.

Gaylord Nelson, Congressman Dave Obey and countless other elected officials relied upon Martin for his spirited advocacy on a broad array of environmental causes, especially the protection of the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior as the Apostle Island National Lakeshore, the reintroduction of elk into the North Woods, and the creation of wild and scenic waterways.

I and others who know Martin have been blessed by his humor, have been motivated by his endless ideas and entertained through his wildlife videos and countless stories.

One of Martin's last projects was a request that the Brunsweiler River that he loved so much be designated as a Wild River to protect this natural resource for the future. In respect of Martin and confirmation of this stewardship legacy, Representative Sherman and I are today circulating co-sponsorship of this legislation.

Martin is a member of an elite group of environmental champions, Gaylord Nelson, Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson, and John Muir who leave our natural resources so much cleaner and our lives richer through their energetic stewardship leadership.